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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA,

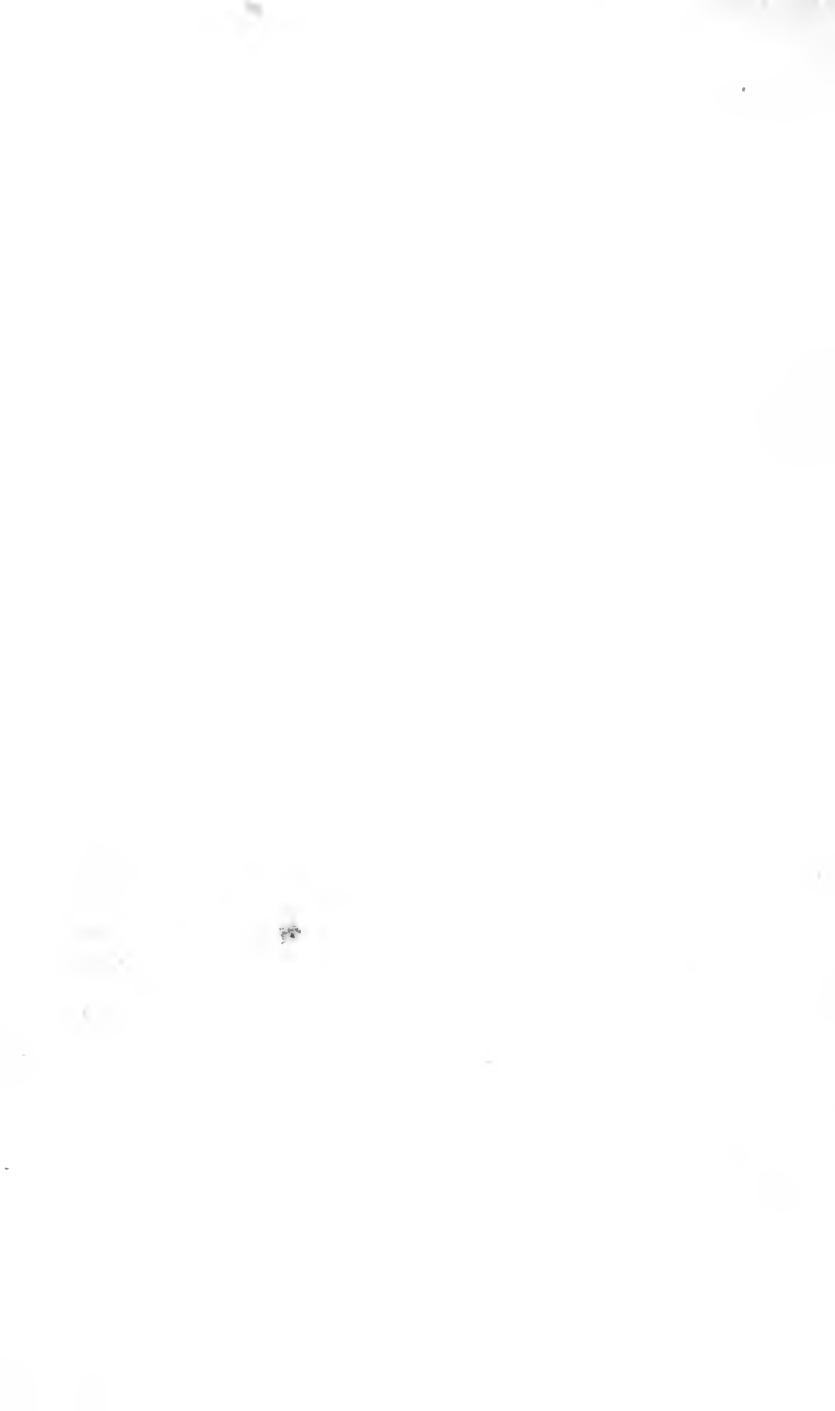
JUNE 4th, 1856,

BY

MATT W. RANSOM, ESQ.

RALEIGH:
"CAROLINA CULTIVATOR" OFFICE.

1856.



CORRESPONDENCE.

PHILANTHROPIC HALL, June 8th, 1856.

MATT W. RANSOM, Esqr.

Sir:—As a committee of the Philanthropic Society, we tender you the thanks of that body for the eloquent and patriotic address which you recently delivered, and request a copy of the same for publication.

Allow us as individuals to express our earnest thanks to you for the expression of sentiments which are calculated to make us better men and better citizens, and to hope that you will comply with the wishes of the body which we represent.

Respectfully yours,

W. H. JORDON,
H. P. HARRELL,
JNO. McLAUGHLIN,
Committee.

VERONA, NORTHAMPTON Co., July 20th, 1856.

Gentlemen:—

I have received your very polite note, requesting for publication a copy of the Address which I had the honor to deliver before the Literary Societies of the University at its last Commencement.

The same motives which induced me to accept your esteemed invitation impel me to comply with this flattering request. I herewith enclose you a copy of the Address.

With feelings of gratitude and affection to yourselves and our Society which I cannot express,

I am sincerely your friend,

M. W. RANSOM.

Messrs:

JORDON,
HARRELL,
McLAUGHLIN,
Committee.

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ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies :

When that most illustrious master of English eloquence, Edmund Burke, in the zenith of his genius, appeared before the University of Glasgow, his peerless voice faltered with the beating of his great heart, and the orator who had power to thrill a continent, *there* stood speechless as a statue. In that sublime scene nature herself proclaimed the respect due to science and virtue. The accomplished scholar, the splendid philosopher, the unsullied statesman, whose name could shake a throne, whose eye gazed unmoved on mitres and sceptres and diadems, and whose giant reason stalked like a conqueror among the proudest of Europe's peers, the representatives of wealth, lineage and royalty, when brought before the representatives of the Letters of his country, this sovereign of genius and learning, a captive in the chains of his own emotions, remained as mute as the walls that surrounded him—a type of the homage of man to that intellectual light whose source is above the stars, and a monument of the glory of Literature only eclipsed by the silent affection of the apostle of liberty and truth. And who can stand *here*, amid these classic altars, around these shrines of memory, beneath these familiar shades, in this venerable Hall, on this ever-honored Anniversary, before this brilliant circle of youthful hope and the assembled intelligence of the State, adorned and graced by that lovely presence which speaks to our hearts of all that is good, beautiful, pure and holy—and not feel overpowered by associations of the place, the time and the purposes of our meeting. There is a fragrance in the air, a light upon the face, a friendship in the heart, like the summer of life, which make us almost feel that some Genius of love is hovering over us, every breath from whose wings dispels the clouds of care, inspires virtuous joys, and fans and hallows the flames of hope.

I regret that I can bring no fit offering to this beautiful festival. Would that I had, for your entertainment, some casket of precious gems—the rich jewels of history and of learning—some boquets of fresh and fragrant flowers from the enchanted land of poetry and rhetoric—some mental telescope to transport you to the last-discovered planet in the far-off Heaven of Science, or a panorama

of the icy palaces of the Arctic whale, and the snowy couch of the Aurora Borealis. These tributes you must not expect from me.—The inferior Greek could not lift the shield of Achilles, nor can I wear the armor of the famous sages who have so often hung these walls with the trophies of conquered arts. It seems but yesterday, since with youthful companions I left your Pierian walks to enter the great world of men, and to day, almost before I have passed the portico to the temple of human knowledge, in the morning of experience, I return by your high request to teach you the solemn lessons of a pilgrimage of which I have seen but little more than yourselves. But as an adopted son of that beloved Society whose beneficence brightened my friendless pathway, as a North Carolinian nurtured by the foster care of this noble University, as a citizen of the American Republic, dependent for its life and glory upon the education of its people, I felt that I had no right to decline your honored invitation. I had at least, interest, sympathy, devotion, gratitude and love—and I thought that I would bring them.

I come too, my young friends, to greet you with encouragement and joy—to assure you that you have a place in our hearts—to welcome you to the duties, the destinies, and the blessings of active life and to hail in your coming the rising sun of our good State. I am here to testify the thankfulness of the land to your estimable Faculty, to congratulate their successful labors, to rejoice with you in their eminent qualifications, to wish them long continued honor and prosperity, and to express my sincere and fervent gratitude for their services to me and yet more for their fidelity to the Institution and their usefulness to the country. I come also with affectionate admiration to declare to our sister Societies the fond remembrance still cherished by their departed children, to tell them again of the just esteem in which they are universally held, to animate their noble efforts and to acknowledge their high claims among the literary institutions of the age. Let us hope that as the mild satellites of this larger luminary they may go on revolving in their placid spheres, and, like the beautiful badges you wear, may their memories ever shine on our bosoms as pure souvenirs of “Virtue,” golden lights of “Science” and bright stars of “Liberty.” And more than all, I come to represent the deep interest, the high regard, the general attraction felt by the people to this illustrious College. Her auspices are all bright. In her story we find nothing that we would alter—it is a shining record of virtue, patriotism and piety. Her future will be just to her past.

It will be read in the diffused knowledge, the enlightened sentiments, the moral habits, the just tastes, the conservative principles, the free institutions, the patriotic spirit and the christian character of the commonwealth. Nor will it end here. To-day sixteen States are consulting the oracles of her wisdom and erudition and radiating from this source you may see broad beams and bright rays traversing and gladdening every segment of the national horizon. And what North Carolinian's heart does not warm at the mention of Chapel Hill? Whose eye does not kindle at the thought of the University of his State? Who among us can look at the long roll of her distinguished sons, read the fair annals of her trials and her triumphs, behold her fame now spread upon the wings of the Eagle of America and remember that she is all our own, founded by our fathers, endowed by their love, sustained by their intelligence, the daughter of their hopes and the mother of our learning, and not feel proud of his State, proud of her University and proud of the great and good men who have left us the inheritance? Let the University be our monument and our emblem. On the escutcheon of North Carolina, amid our armorial ensigns, side by side with the Goddess of the harvest fields, and the image of Liberty, let her lofty columns be placed, to remind those who behold that heraldic group, that all the arts are enlightened by science—that intelligence is the shield and the lamp of freedom—that the temple of knowledge is the temple of power—and to show the world that a statue of true glory can be carved from the native marble of *our* virtues. And in all the fortunes of our State, may that figure fixed on her banner stand like the mother of Coriolanus at the gates of Rome, a moral wall between the ambition of her sons and the safety of her country.

I must hasten from these pleasant meditations, among which I have already lingered too long, to the consideration of a subject deeply interesting to the Young Gentlemen of the University of North Carolina, and dear, I trust, to the hearts of all America.—I shall dedicate this hour to a national sentiment—a theme of patriotism that ought to be entwined with the Literature of our Country and consecrated by an association with the noblest purposes of science and education—the theme of our National Union. To that grand topic I invoke your audience, not with the vain expectation that I can rise to the “height of the great argument” but with the simple hope that by introducing that idea here, it may happen that others will pursue it and it shall come to pass that

the image of the Union of these States shall be firmly fixed among the imperishable monuments of the Genius which it fosters and protects. I wish to see the American Union solidly entrenched in the strong citadel of American Literature—its destiny incorporated with the deathless truths of Science—its name and its blessings engraven upon the enduring marble of Art and brightened and hallowed by the ever burning light of Eloquence; that this master work of the world, thus resting upon the cloudless heights of Reason and Justice, may become sacred in the eyes of all men, and, like the Palladium of the ancients, set in the clear skies of intelligence, forever stand in glory above the fortunes of party and the storms of human passion. The Sun of Liberty and the United Stars around it, will shine upon our eyes with a steadier and purer lustre when beheld in the serene vault of virtue and wisdom.—The Roman orator, gazing upon the splendors of the City of the Cæsars, exclaimed, “that there was nothing in which human virtue more nearly approached the dignity of the Gods than in building States, or preserving them when founded,” and surely an American citizen as he surveys the boundless prospect of his country’s grandeur may well add, that, to preserve this government is a divine duty, and the brightest page in the history of our scholars will be that on which shall be inscribed their devotion, their attachment and their services to the Union.

The history of that Union, now embracing, in the life of nations, the short period of sixty-seven years, presents a picture for human congratulation unequalled in the recorded annals or authentic traditions of any age since the creation of the world. The War of Liberty had been fought. The peace of Paris in 1783, had proclaimed the Independence of America. The colonial Union, which springing not so much from a sense of common danger as from an ardent and undivided love of liberty, had been the tower of the revolution, still survived, and was now feebly transformed into the baseless and disproportioned fabric of the Confederation. That “rope of sand” soon fell to pieces, and young America, delivered from all foreign dominion, was rushing headlong with the energy of an undammed flood upon the wild void of anarchy. It was the first bound of freedom just released from the restraints of oppression—the ocean heaved and tossed—its billows, so lately confined, now rose to the skies, and the whole earth rocked with tumult. “Darkness was upon the face of the deep,” and the orb of hope which had so lately risen upon the New World was going to

set in the waves of deep despair, or change into the terrible and bloody meteor that was beginning to darken the face of Europe. The Syren of French Philosophy, that Circe of liberty, with her maddening harp, was fast stealing the hearts of the people, and the infant Hercules of the Republic was about to perish in his cradle, not by the serpents of envy and hatred, but through the ignorance, the discord, and the treason of his nurses.

Fortunately for the world, in that long and gloomy night there was an eye that never slept. It was not the eye of Argus or of Ulysses, but the eye of the Heaven appointed Redeemer of his country. He saw the danger and averted it. With a voice of patriotism, and peace the Father of his Country called upon the people for a united government of equal laws, and the whole country echoed a willing response ; for, he had but to lay his hand upon the nation's heart, and it beat to order, harmony, duty and justice. The circular letter addressed by General Washington to the Governors of the different States, in which he says "that an indissoluble Union of the American States under one Federal head is essential to our existence as an independent power, and is the main pillar of liberty," was the harbinger of this Union. Like the dove from the Ark, that letter was sent forth by the great pilot of the Ship of Independence, as a herald upon a mission of discovery and like the dove, it soon returned bringing upon its wings a token of life and of love. The same great hand that had borne the sword of our liberties and guarded the cradle of independence, now laid the corner stone of the arch that was to shield them both. The Convention met. The Constitution of United America was framed, and the foremost object of that great deed, declared upon its very forehead, sealed in the first line upon its sacred face, was the establishment of a "perfect union" of the American States and People. And then as State after State marched into the Confederacy and added link to link in the chain of the Union, until its broad circle embraced them all, the work of our political and national creation was finished—the light of the Constitution blazed and beamed over the whole heavens—the arch of the Union spanned the circumference of the Republic, and the pillars which upheld the starry firmament of Liberty, were supported and adorned by the bright bow, which reflected the glories of the past and promised peace to the future.

The Constitution and the Union ! What American, what man ! among the living or the dead, can speak of the Constitution and the Union as they ought to be spoken of ? Can all the lan-

guages and tongues of men express their beneficence and glory ? Look around on this vast sphere ; behold these happy millions—stretch your vision to the remotest corners of the earth and down the line of posterity to its most distant generation ; and the universal present and the everlasting future will answer “No.” American liberty is higher than all eloquence, grander than all languages, and more sublime than all the reason and imagination and wisdom of men. In all the forms of Government that have ever existed, in the long annals of sixty centuries of empire, in the brightest dream of philanthropists and the happiest speculations of philosophy, the American Union, in all that constitutes true national greatness and renown, promotes public justice and honor, fosters the virtue, happiness and dignity of society, in all the elements, attributes and qualities of a benign, peaceful, and paternal Sovereign, is without a precedent or a parallel. It stands alone like the great luminary of day, unsurpassed, unequalled, unapproachable—in the splendor of its achievements, the utility of its offices, the extent of its influence, the magnificence of its course, and its majestic simplicity. To it we are to ascribe the preservation of our national independence, and the perpetuity of Liberty itself. Under its auspices, in the short space of threescore years, we have established a national character, which is felt and respected by every people upon the face of the earth ; and which to-day makes the United States of America the first power upon the habitable globe, and gives it a prouder place in the public opinion of mankind than was ever filled by any nation of any age. What of greatness and grandeur and goodness has this Union of ours not accomplished ? Its influence has gone hand in hand with its enterprise and genius around the world, and every step of its history is marked with generous philanthropy and successful prowess. It found maritime law but another Island of Delos floating under the waves of precedent, at the discretion of power, and only employed for purposes of wrong ; and it raised it from the deep, fixed it in its place and bound it with metes of right and justice. It first announced the independence and equality of all nations upon the seas, proclaimed the immunity of flags, struck the blot of impressment from the public code and inserted in its place a Statute of freedom and a Charter for civilization. It found the highways of the ocean taxed with tribute and closed by avarice, and it opened wide the gates of trade, made the universal seas free, and taught commerce the

way over them—for with the Eagle we visit all climes, and there is no spot beneath the Heavens where our Stars do not glitter.

—————“*Quis jam locus ?*

Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris ?

Useful as the Union has been abroad, it has yet been more beneficent at home. Under its ægis three millions of people have multiplied to twenty-five—thirteen States have increased to thirty-one—the Republic has extended over the Mississippi and now reaches the Pacific Seas. This morning the rising Sun dawned upon the Eastern wing, and this evening the setting Sun will go to rest under the Western wing of the Union—a “vast breadth” of five thousand miles inhabited by twenty-five millions of intelligent, industrious, patriotic freemen, and all countrymen, under one wise, firm, and equal government. From the Gulf Stream to the Trade Winds—from the Icebergs to the Orange trees, one mighty heart throbs with freedom and basks in knowledge. What a monument of peace, prosperity and power. Let it speak to us, from its boundless base, of duty and patriotism. Let it raise our thoughts to its sphered dome, above all local, sectional ideas, and fix them upon our Country, our Liberty, our Union, and the voice of human hope throughout the world, and the destiny of man in all time to come, will hail and proclaim its glory and its blessings.

It has been truly said that all things are to be judged by comparison, and it would be well for those who propose to calculate the value of the Union, to consider by what standards they will test its merits. Every thing is relative, and a form of Government ought certainly to be esteemed in proportion to its excellence in comparison with all other forms of Government, and that excellence ought to be estimated by the progress, virtue, intelligence and happiness of the people who live under it. Adopting this principle as a rule, let us try the American Union by it ; for the picture would be but half complete, in which the Artist forgot to mingle shade with light, and, altogether omitted the background on which the main figure of his piece ought to have been represented. Let your historical recollections carry you back to the great Republics of Antiquity. Fix your eyes, not upon the ruins, but the living forms of Grecian and Roman liberty in the halcyon days of “arms and arts and trophies,” when their orbs shone with meridian brightness, and the world worshipped the genius of one and bowed to the valor of the other. A dazzling spectacle it is true—at the end of twenty-four hundred years we pause in mingled admiration before the Mistress

of Letters and the Queen of Nations. But go to the proud capitals of Athens and Rome, and, with all of their histories open before you, select with care, not an age, a century or an half century, but a year, a day, or an hour, the brightest and happiest which you can find in their own annals, separate it nicely from all the shades that precede, or follow its splendor, view it alone in all of its beauty, unshorn of any of its beams, and in the fairest light which partial Genius has thrown around it, and you will find in that one favored and chosen spot upon the chequered page of their history, more to regret, deplore, and condemn, than every enemy of the American Union can discover in the whole career of perilous and trying vicissitudes through which we have passed from the foundation of the Government. Where in the history of Roman liberty can the eye of the American patriot repose with pleasure? The Republic extended from the banishment of the Tarquins to the battle of Actium, over a period of six hundred years, and during all of that time the Temple of Janus was shut but once. The close of the first Punic war left Rome at peace with the world, but to make war upon herself. Domestic strife and civil discord again drove the Republic to arms, and the nation vainly sought its own safety in unjust conquest and ambitious empire. The Eagle, whose burnished wings reflected the sunbeams from the Pyramids to the Pyrenees, was a bird of prey, and a nation in armor for six hundred years, and a sword that was never sheathed might dazzle, but could never bless mankind. Will you find in the land of Marathon and Demosthenes a more encouraging example? Take the age of Pericles, by far the most illustrious and favored age of Greece. It was the era when the Drama, Philosophy, Eloquence, Heroism, and Architecture, crowned Athens with their fadeless laurels, and placed upon the brow of Greece the Diadem of the Muses. When Zeno taught his ethics, Sophocles composed his tragedies, Thucydides wrote his history, Cimon conquered the Persians and Pericles paved the city with marble and boasted "that during his administration he had caused no tears to flow." It was the palmiest day of Grecian liberty—but we must not forget that the unhappy colonies of Samos and Byzantium were taxed against their will, to their impoverishment and ruin, to pay for the costly improvements of the city—that Thucydides, whose pen immortalized the age, was banished by sedition, that Cimon was unjustly ostracised for treason, that Pericles died of a broken heart, in a civil war, after he had sold justice in the streets, that the approaching armies of Sparta,

a sister State, dissolved the assembly to whom Sophocles was reciting his poems, and that the beautiful but fallen Aspasia had already corrupted public virtue and poisoned social happiness. Does Modern Europe furnish those who propose to calculate the value of the Union a more cheering comparison? Let the Crimea answer. The flames of Sebastopol have written it in tragedy—sad as the pestilence and dark as the storm—on the Heavens, and all Ocean's waters cannot wash it out—the world reads it and weeps over it, and yet it is but another scene in that drama of blood which European tyranny has been acting for a thousand years. The curtain will hardly fall upon the death scene of the Black Sea, before it rises upon the tears of Constantinople and the flashing and clashing swords of the Allies. Look at France, the last hope of liberty in the East!—the ashes of Lafayette sleep beneath the frown of the despot—there is no France, Napoleon is the State, and in him Borgia and Machiavelli again live. You might as well go to Etna or Vesuvius for the source of the sun, as to modern Europe for models of self government. Nor does South America brighten the shades of the picture. In vain did the noble Bolivar raise the standard of freedom on her plains. The trail of Spain, like the track of the deadly Constrictor, is still upon the banks of the Amazon, and along the peaks of the Andes, and you behold in the smoking volcano and the rapacious vulture upon its rocks, the emblem and the ensign of South American liberty. If every nation upon the continent was struck at one blow from existence, the civilized world would scarcely feel a sensation. Shall we bring the figure nearer home, and run the parallel into the bosom of the Republic? It were a thankless task to compare State with State and the work of one with the work of the whole, for we would wish them all equally good, glorious and happy. Yet “there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.” It is indeed a touching reflection, and one that ought ever to be remembered, that the little State of Rhode Island, covering not a thousandth part of the territory of the Republic, though her voice in the National Councils balances that of the great State of New York, has experienced in her own domestic history, in the administration of her little State government more disorder, tumult, sedition, and bloodshed than has befallen the administration of the Union from the adoption of the constitution to the present hour—in the regulation of commerce, the conduct of wars, the establishment of states and

the discharge of all of its delicate, diversified, and difficult duties. Where will you find a standard by which to calculate the value of the Union? Take the map of the world and spread it out before you; examine it well; follow the lines which distinguish nation from nation and race from race, and reflect calmly upon the rise, progress and condition of every State, people, and empire, that are marked upon it, and you will look in vain for a model by which the wisdom, justice, and success of this Union can be measured. The ancient world did not produce it—the modern world does not furnish it; Plato never dreamed it, Locke could not conceive it.

You cannot calculate the value of the Union. The Astronomer from his observatory may measure the disc of the sun, tell you his distance from the earth, describe the motion of his rays, and predict with positive certainty an eclipse; but he cannot compute the utility of heat, the blessings of light, nor the glory and splendor of the God of day. Who can calculate the value of constitutional, united Liberty—the blessings of a Free Press, Free Schools, and a Free Religion? Go and calculate the value of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the earth that we inhabit. By what mathematical process will you calculate the value of national character! In what scales will you weigh political equality and the ballot-box? At what price would you sell American citizenship? What is self-government worth—its freedom, happiness, and example? “Calculate the value of the Union!” Look at the mighty Mississippi, the Father of Waters—it rises in the nameless snows of North America—runs through twenty-three degrees of latitude, all our own soil, and washes the sides of ten young, flourishing, and powerful States; its tributaries drain the rains that fall in sight of the Atlantic and meet the streams that flow into the Pacific upon the summit of the Rocky Mountains—its broad tides bear on their buoyant bosom the clothing of half of the world, and the fertile valleys, which spread out from its ample banks are capable of producing food for the population of the whole earth for a thousand years to come. On its eastern shore, in a quiet spot, near the Crescent City, you see some clusters of small orange trees growing upon a broken embankment, and now and then an old but flourishing live-oak spreads its green branches over the damp sod. You are on the battle-ground of New Orleans! You behold the field of the most remarkable victory ever won, and as you ascend the mouldering entrenchment, the morning of the Eighth of January, Eighteen Hundred and fifteen rises before you. Your heart beats anxiously;

you watch the serried columns of Packenham advance to the charge—you note the calm faces of Jackson's men—you hear the rifles' peal, the din of musketry, the cannon's roar—you see the repulse, the retreat, the field of the dead and the dying—you cross the moat, and as the smoke clears away, you count the fallen; the English have left twenty six hundred men on that field—the Americans have lost seven killed and six wounded—you remember no victory like it—the historian tells you “it is a disproportion of loss unrecorded of any other battle”—you see the Flag of the Stars waving over you and you feel your country in your veins. Stand upon the battle ground of New Orleans, by the side of the great Father of Waters, and tell me, if you can, what the Union is worth? These are its jewels—they shine brightly in a diadem whose full and radiant circle sparkles all over with glorious deeds.

In that Union we exhibit this day to the admiration of the world the spectacle and example of a free government, which, without levying one cent of tax upon the person or property of any one of its citizens, except such as they voluntarily choose to pay, maintains an army of ten thousand men and a navy sufficient to protect our commerce, now the largest on the seas: which transports public and private intelligence, at home and abroad, over fifty three millions of miles of mail line, and annually distributes to a population scattered over an area of territory of three millions five hundred thousand square miles, not only countless pages of useful public information and valuable practical knowledge, but along with them the seeds and germs of the fruits and flowers of every soil and climate under the sun: which secures to all men by just privileges the rewards of their genius and labor, and keeps open, honest, and learned Courts for the defence of all rights, which local laws do not recognize: whose flag guards its citizens with sacred vigilance on all oceans and in every land, and whose broad nationality warrants to every soul who breathes beneath it a home of security, law, peace, freedom, and honor, and which, in its whole history, has crushed no man's liberty, nor “shed one drop of blood for treason or rebellion.” Shall this spectacle be blotted from the light of day; this example cease to instruct and cheer the hearts of men? This is the question which this generation has to settle, not only for itself, but for generations in all time to come—the most momentous question that ever engaged the souls of patriots. The preservation of the Union of the States and People of America.

I shall not stop to inquire, neither my inclination nor the pro-

prieties of this occasion permit me to inquire, whether the Constitution established a Federal or a National Union—"whether sovereignty resides with the people of the States as bodies, or in the people of the United States as a whole." These questions belong to other places and times—they now threaten the Union with no danger, and are almost forgotten in the happy fact that whatever its particular character may be, the Union has well answered the purposes and hopes of those who formed it. But, there is a danger—a dark and gloomy danger—an appalling and overwhelming danger—which hovers in black clouds over our government and liberties, and casts a livid and frightful shade over this beautiful land.

It is Dismemberment which agitates the bosom of the Republic, the word which makes the hearts of patriots stand still in their breasts and the pulse of tyrants leap with joy—the word upon which the Father of his Country set his curse—the word of despair. We hear it discussed in social circles, proclaimed by the press and advocated in public councils. Let us not be deceived by sounds. Disunion means nothing less than the disruption of the Government—the destruction of the Constitution, the tearing asunder of the States and the end of the Republic. With one blow, it proposes to strike from being the works of our Fathers, to annihilate our progress and achievements, to blot out our glories and extinguish our hopes. It would overthrow the Union and leave nothing but shame above its ruins; it would draw a ruthless line across the Republic, although it passed over the grave of Washington and divided the ashes of the Great Father of our Country.

With what plea can Disunion appear before the bar of this world, or the throne of another? It proposes as a remedy for evils, an evil before which all others sink into insignificance; it suggests as a measure of honor, an act which would cover the American name with dishonor as long as the earth remains—it holds up before us the bloody mantle of liberty, pierced with a thousand deadly wounds, and tells us that is the way to preserve freedom—it shows us the temple of self-government wrapped in flames, and all that is valuable burning in the conflagration, and does not, and cannot point to one benefit conferred, one grievance redressed, one right restored by the awful sacrifice; it is that spirit which would have the beautiful Heavens with their rolling worlds of light, and the great central Sun, around which all in harmony revolve, hurled into

chaos and darkness, because the little planet of Vesta, or some straggling comet happened to wander from its sphere.

And how is disunion to be accomplished? Can any rational man for a moment expect peaceable, friendly dissolution? Must not the causes that lead to separation, of necessity, lead to hostilities? You might as well look to see the mountains leave their bases, and melt into the ocean, and the earth quit its orbit without convulsion, as expect the wheels of this government to be broken up and its revolutions thrown into space without violence and collision. No! the Pearl of the Union can be dissolved in nothing but blood. The Almighty hand, which fashioned the Universe, could alone divide and partition out the army, and the navy, and the treasury, and all else we have, among the inflamed fragments into which the Union would be sundered. Disunion contemplates anarchy, war, civil war, havoc and night. It can contemplate nothing else. And after it is all over, if it ever shall be over, where will we find ourselves? How shall we stand in our own eyes and the eyes of the world? Where will be our proud commerce, our emblazoned banner, our national name, the peace, prosperity, glory, and power, which we now possess and enjoy? There will be no longer an American citizen upon the wide earth. Disunion will be the tomb in which all, all are buried, a tomb of ashes and infamy, "in which dismal vaults in black succession open" on "sights of woe, regions of sorrow, doleful shades—without end."

And shall Bunker Hill be divided from Yorktown, and Mecklenburg from Philadelphia? Shall our sires of the Revolution have left the bloody tracks of their naked feet on the snows of Valley Forge in vain? Shall Washington have lived for nothing? Is American history, like Herculaneum and Pompeii, to be buried in ruins and only dug from oblivion as a curious wonder? Is this last experiment of self-government to fail, and is man never to be free? Are we, in our day, to see any State leave the Union as "Hagar with young Ishmael wandered from the tents of Israel" with hands raised against all men and the hands of all men raised against her? Or are we to witness the sadder spectacle of a section of the Confederacy following the hated example of the false Mother in King Solomon's Court who desired the living child to be cut in twain, that she might have one-half of the dead corpse? Is the flag of the Republic to be torn in two and divided, the stars pulled apart and the stripes rent asunder, its bright folds stained with brother's blood, and wet with patriot's tears? Shall the Constitution itself

perish as a scroll, and its mangled scraps and shreds be blown about by the winds and trampled in the dust, the melancholy insignia of the dismembered Republic? These would be some of the trophies of disunion.

But it cannot be. Enlightened, considerate, patriotic America, will not, cannot commit an act of folly and madness, the greatest and the darkest which human error ever conceived, or human depravity accomplished. See that beautiful ship in full sail upon the flowing ocean—how nobly she moves along her trackless pathway. Her wings of canvass hang like sunlit clouds about the steepled masts, and the waves in glad harmony play around her ample sides as the gallant prow steps from billow to billow to the music of the tides. It is the flag-ship of liberty—she carries the fortunes, not of Cæsar, but of man—her deck is the tribune of the people, and the altar of the living God. She is laden with the spoils of a thousand arts—science illumines her progress, and literature sheds a halo on her wake—blessings cleave to her sails as she bears to distant shores the stores of plenty and the lights of freedom, and from half the family of man a voice of interest and hope hails her, speed and safety. Presently when the waters are all calm and the skies bright, a few factious spirits on that ship of good hopes, raise a dispute about the variation of the compass, and as the vessel sails on, the contest waxes warmer, and others of ardent passions enlist in the controversy. One party vows that the needle is varying too much to the West—the other declares that it is inclining rapidly Eastward.—The wise, the considerate and the faithful, labor to pacify the disputants, and restore harmony among the crew, by assurances that the noble bark is on her proud way to the haven of happiness and honor, and that, if she is wandering on either side of the right line, it becomes her men to *unite* in bringing her back, by consulting and obeying the unerring chart of the stars, and not by angry reproaches and bitter criminations to jeopard her safety and mar the auspicious voyage. But nothing can satisfy faction—conciliation is denounced as a dishonorable surrender, and the adversaries, maddened by mutual opposition, furiously resolve that they will stay together no longer, they will divide that blessed ship, and separate forever. The friends of the great vessel entreat and implore them to forbear, urge the folly and madness of attempting to split that ship asunder, when the billows are rolling and roaring beneath it, and show them the jealous rivals in the distance, who only watch the opportunity of their dissensions and hope to conquer them when divided. But all

in vain—the blind and frenzied partizans heed not the counsels of prudence or justice—in vain are they told that the ship cannot be divided without sinking and burying all in one common ruin—in vain are they reminded of her glorious career and her brilliant hopes—in vain do they hear the prayers of millions, and see arms stretched from every shore to save that fated vessel. All, all in vain. They rush on deck, seize their axes, and with uplifted arms the heavy blows begin to—no! it cannot be! the tragedy is impossible! those blows will not be given—that ship will not be divided—the sad fragments of the wreck will not be seen floating on the waves—but on, on it will sail, with pennants streaming in the breeze, and glad hearts beating with “souls as free.” In that emblem we behold our country, and the wickedness and folly of those who would dismember it. No—the Union will not be dissolved! The blood that was shed for liberty is mingled with the waters of the ocean, and the sands of the hills, and plains of the Union. The same streams met and mingled again in victory upon our lakes, and along the mountains and valleys of Mexico, and now flow in united currents through Northern and Southern veins, and they cannot be separated; it is the invincible Anglo Saxon blood, which never runs backward, but “like the Propontic Sea, whose icy current and compulsive course knows no retiring ebb, it goes right on”—it is the Anglo-American blood, which stronger than the Gulf Stream, flows and beats in one indivisible tide from Plymouth Rock to the Caribbean Sea.

Nature, too, has put bonds around and over the Union, which almost forbid dissolution. No fanaticism can divide the storied walls of the Alleghanies, or cut in two the ever living flood of the Mississippi; they are laws which cannot be repealed, and they do not bind the earth more firmly together than they hold the States of the Confederacy in the fixed embrace of a common destiny. While the Mississippi pours its torrent waves from the British possessions to the Gulf of Mexico and the piles of the Alleghanies lift their blue heights to the clouds, the Union must stand. The social and commercial dependencies which hang thickly around these natural monuments, and make them the heart and the ribs, no less of trade than of the Republic, seem to render it impossible to draw any line of division between the Slave States on the one side and the Free States on the other. Chains of iron could not fasten the States upon the upper waters of the Mississippi to those at its mouth more steadfastly and eternally than they are bound by the changeless decrees of that necessity which compels their trade down the mighty chan-

nel of the King of Floods. Apart then from our political relations, there is a social and commercial dependence, sympathy, and connection, stretching over the whole Confederacy, and attaching all its parts in an almost indissoluble bond of common advantage, interest, and association.

These are indeed strong tendencies to Union, but over and above them all, more powerful than commercial exigencies, or the currents of rivers or massive mountains, is the overruling and absorbing sentiment of American patriotism. Patriotism made the Union, and patriotism will preserve it. A national American patriotism, which fills the whole heart, knows no localities, and is as broad and comprehensive as the Union. It is that patriotism, more than all else, which holds the Confederacy together and makes us one people; like the viewless principle of attraction, cohesion, or gravity, or whatever it is which keeps the physical world in place, that sentiment is the chord, the bond, the life of the Union. It was that sentiment which, when sectional jealousy raised its voice of discord in the first Congress of Independence, inspired Patrick Henry, the Prophet of liberty, as he exclaimed "I am not a Virginian, but an American;" and it is that sentiment which makes us declare that we are North Carolinians, but, we are Americans. And with what a magnificent vision does that idea fill the mind to-day? You or I may stand, as we stand here, upon the Rocks of New England, by the great falls of Niagara, upon the green hills of the Colorado, on the sands of the Salt Lake, by the foaming shores of the Pacific, and look up and say, this is my country. Aye, you may look up, and with your eyes follow the sun in his revolution, and know that you may go wherever his rays shine, and the flag of that country will be above you and around you. Who would not be an American citizen? Who would wipe from his face the bright image of American Nationality? Who would look upon the star-spangled ensign of his country and not feel that his heart was in every fold and fibre, and with all its stars and stripes? Let us not be told then that we cannot remain in the Union with self respect and honor. Rather let us seek and earn that highest, noblest, most lasting of all honors, the immortal honor preserving the Constitution and the Union and of perpetuating American liberty to all posterity, and holding it up in undiminished glory to the sight of the living world for an example and a solace. Let us not enquire upon what section of the Confederacy dismemberment would fall heaviest, or to what State it would prove the greatest affliction; but remembering that it must

involve the ruin of both sections and of all the States, and feeling how poor the consolation will be, which rational men derive to their own misfortunes from the sight of others' woes, let us labor in the nobler work of promoting our own welfare by consulting and increasing the general good. This is the duty of patriotism.

There are other considerations which at this time and place address themselves to us with peculiar force, and which ought not in this connection to be omitted. I allude to the claims of the Union upon the scholars of the country. What an influence is United America destined to exert on the mind of the human race. What must the world say to the startling fact that at this time there are in proportion to population, seven times as many persons who habitually read and write in this country, as there are in the most favored and enlightened nations of either hemisphere. To adopt a striking illustration of Mr. Webster, "the population of the United States is twenty-three millions—lay off on the continent of Europe an area in any shape you please—a triangle, square, circle, parallelogram, or trapezoid, and of an extent that shall contain one hundred and fifty millions of people, and you will find within the United States more persons who do habitually read and write than can be embraced within the lines of your demarcation." What an intellectual development! Twenty-three millions of souls raised by the lights of knowledge nearer to virtue, happiness and truth. If knowledge is power, as it certainly is, and power of the best kind, what rank in the family of Nations ought to be assigned these United States? The Republic of Liberty is indeed the land of intelligence. And to the unjust and ungenerous taunts of foreign criticism upon the poverty of our literature, we might well reply that generally diffused knowledge, and extensive popular information, are the first duty and highest glory of a free government, and that there are more daily journals in the United States than there are in the world beside. But we have a National Literature, and a proud literature it is, a just, free, and Christian literature, "the graceful ornament of our Republican Institutions," and the bright reflector of social virtues and national piety. I need not tell an American audience what the world has admitted, that the first historian of the age is our countryman. The pen of Prescott has illustrated the history of three ages, made the land of the Montezumas and the Incas classic ground, and set the glory of Castile and Aragon in the crown of American genius. His fame is connected with both hemispheres, and will go down to posterity associated with the discovery and

conquests of the New World, and inscribed on the most wonderful page of Eastern achievement. As scholars, patriots and men reverencing a bright example of their embodiment, we wish that from this venerable temple of a people's learning, a voice full of love could this day visit the interesting sage, and bear to him a memorial of our sympathy and affection. May that delightful wisdom, which has charmed all circles and grown ripe with years, yet linger long upon the calm verge of evening, and go to rest at last with not a cloud to shade the serene splendor of its decline.

Now let me ask what is it which gives you and me and all of us a patriotic participation in the world wide renown of Prescott, the ever charming page of Irving, the noble story of Bancroft, and the morning song of Longfellow? What gives us a share in the fame of that philosophy which has tamed the flaming minister of the skies and made it the obedient messenger of human thought? What is it that reflects on us the glory of that eloquence whose breath inspired by philanthropy fanned the flame of liberty in two continents at once, as it was wafted across the ocean and echoed from the classic isles of Greece to the sunny shores of South America? What is it that sheds upon us the splendor of that science which has connected the Hemispheres by steam, brought the whole family of man into one neighborhood, made a new chart of the ocean, and with an electric pen records the motion of the planets? What is it that imparts to us a property in the beauty of that art, which glows on the canvass of Sully, bodies the majesty of greatness in the bronze of Mills, and will live forever in the breathing marble of Powers? What is it but the Union that blends all of these separate glories and blessings into one beautiful and consistent illumination—which spreads out like a canopy over the whole American name, and blazes all over the earth as brilliant and dazzling as the Aurora Borealis, and steady and constant as the milky way in the Heavens. What is it but the Union which by the peace and prosperity it has secured has enabled us to build up our thousand printing presses, our myriad schools, our countless colleges and our overflowing libraries? What is it but the Union which has secured to the people of these States a common inheritance of freedom, a common enjoyment of renown, and a common opportunity of intelligence? And as a patriot, I would not part with my legacy in the fame of Lexington, and Bunker Hill, and Princeton and Yorktown, and Guilford, and Niagara, and Erie, and Buena Vista and Mexico, at a less price than the precious blood which they cost, so as a scholar, I could not,

without tears of sorrow and a heart broken with shame behold the day when I could not hold up my head and declare all over the world that I was a countryman of Franklin and Fulton, and breathed with Webster and Calhoun and Clay the same air of liberty.

Young Gentlemen of the University of North Carolina, as you appreciate the blessings of good government, the priceless inheritance of civil and religious liberty, the universal esteem of mankind, and the fate of our race for all future ages, as you value learning and desire peace, as you reverence the memory of our Fathers and love the honor of our Country, as philanthropists, patriots and Christians, I implore you by all of these considerations to use your influence, your talents, your time and all the power you may possess, to preserve, perpetuate and immortalize the Union of these States, and the Constitution under which we live, and God grant, that that Constitution and that Union, enrobed in the mantle of Washington may last forever.







